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Official Records

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New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Address by Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus

The President: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Cyprus.

Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Cyprus, His Excellency Mr. Glafcos Clerides, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Clerides: I should like to begin by extending to you, Sir, my warmest congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly. This is not merely a recognition of your long experience and your outstanding ability and diplomatic skill, but also a reflection of the esteem in which your country, Portugal, is held in the United Nations. We are certain that under your able guidance the work of this very important session of the General Assembly will be a landmark in the history of the Organization.

I should also like to pay a warm tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the determined leadership which he has demonstrated on vital issues and for his reports on the work of the Organization, which have already resulted in the adoption of a series of measures, providing working tools for the activities of the United Nations. Cyprus is particularly grateful to the Secretary-General and his dedicated staff for their untiring efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the question of Cyprus on the basis of United Nations resolutions.

In April 1945, when it was obvious that the world was breaking up into two armed camps, delegates from the then independent nations met to create a world organization capable of building an era of peace and international cooperation out of the chaos and conflict of the Second World War. They drafted the United Nations Charter, a document of principles and norms, aimed at effectively dealing with aggression and improving human rights and economic and social conditions for people everywhere.

For five decades the spirit of the Charter was kept alive under very difficult circumstances, even when in many cases the United Nations took the blame for the failings of its Member States. It is an indisputable fact that the United Nations, despite its shortcomings, has managed the transforming of colonies into independent countries, restoring democracies and promoting the rule of law. It has also been successful in resolving conflicts in many parts of the world — in Namibia, in Mozambique, in Angola, in Cambodia, in Central America and in the Caribbean — and it has provided the inspiration for the drafting of major arms-control treaties. Its peace-keepers have saved thousands of lives, fed

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millions of people, and helped to restore a degree of normality in areas of conflict.

Equally, it has played an important role in promoting human rights and stimulating economic recovery, monetary stability and growth in the developing world. Furthermore, over the past 50 years there has been a series of United Nations-inspired conferences which dealt with major issues that vitally affect the peoples of the world. More recently, United Nations-sponsored conferences, including the Earth Summit at Rio, the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, the Cairo International Conference on Population and Development, the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development and the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women, have left their indelible imprint on the history of mankind. On the other hand, there have been reversals — in Rwanda United Nations efforts failed to avert genocide, and in Somalia the tragedy continues. Equally distressing is the unabated bloodshed in the Balkans, while United Nations efforts on the problem of my country are still to bear fruit.

Fifty years of existence provide an important opportunity to look back, to reflect on both our successes and failures. But it is also an opportunity to look forward, to determine where we can and should go from here, especially now, when the cold war, now ended, has regrettably generated a wide range of security problems stemming from economic, political or social tensions or issues of nationalism. The complex nature of the challenges calls for multilateral action and an integrated approach. Drawing from the lessons of the past and the challenges of the present, we must open up new ways to use the mechanisms provided originally by the Charter.

In this context, the continuing debate on the Agenda for Peace has stimulated new thinking about the particular changes needed to re-equip the United Nations for its role in this field, so as to vindicate the vision of its founders. From this rostrum I have had the opportunity to present in some detail our views on the proposed conceptual orientations. I do not need to stress that my country is fully committed to these goals. The recent history of Cyprus can be seen as a case study, demonstrating the need for such an initiative and the importance of further expanding its concepts.

Under the United Nations Charter disarmament and arms control are integral parts of international peace and security. Though for decades progress towards disarmament and arms control was made impossible by the rigidities of bipolarization, the latter's demise has now opened up new possibilities.

In the last two years we have witnessed major achievements, the most important of which was the decision to extend indefinitely and unconditionally the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, along with the strengthening of the review process for the Treaty and the adoption of a set of principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Furthermore, we will soon be entering into commitments for the conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty and the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear purposes. These should be seen as products of the momentum which has built up in the disarmament field since the end of the cold war. We share the view that much still needs to be done in the areas of both non-conventional and conventional weapons, for, as long as military threats to security exist, the disarmament and arms-control process will continue to be an essential element of international security.

The reduction of forces and armaments alone cannot provide for or guarantee international security, but it can reduce the risk of an outbreak of military conflict and can contribute to confidence-building and conflict resolution. In this context, I would like to remind this body of my proposal for the complete demilitarization of the Republic of Cyprus: the withdrawal of the Turkish occupation forces, the disbanding of the National Guard of Cyprus, the handing over of all its arms and military equipment to the custody of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force and the placing into a United Nations account of all money saved from the purchase of arms, to be used for infrastructure development projects beneficial to both communities. I feel that our proposal reflects not only our good intentions but also the spirit of the times. Unfortunately, it was rejected by Turkey.

Genuine security also includes economic well-being, protection of human rights and environmental sustainability. All these dimensions function together, in an interlocking and mutually reinforcing way, as foundations of peace. There is much concern today that the United Nations should have an agenda and working method of direct relevance to the economic and social needs of societies in which individuals or groups are deprived of their freedom or of the basic necessities on which human life depends. Newspapers and television screens air these needs daily. The international community's ability to offer a decent and secure existence to all its citizens is called into question by the numerous

human tragedies, atrocities of war, terrorism, traffic in illegal drugs and long-term ecological degradation of our planet.

It is self-evident that global cooperation and effective action is a *sine qua non* for effectively combating these and other evils tormenting world society. Our most important goal must be the implementation of our existing commitments, as provided for in the Charter. In placing the emphasis on this, we are setting no modest objective. What we should recognize is that the body of principles and commitments which have been built up over the last 50 years cover the full range of civil, political, economic and social issues.

Our task should be to reduce the obvious gap between accepted principles and everyday practice, to apply these principles without discrimination and at the same time to consider ways of strengthening further the existing mechanisms. In this context, we must face up to the problem of holding to full account those who flout the authority of the United Nations, persistently refuse to respect the rights of others and choose to disregard the international commitments which they have freely accepted.

When I speak of the need to uphold the authority of the United Nations, I feel entitled to use as an example the experience of my country and its people. Since 1974, when Turkish forces invaded Cyprus, 37 per cent of the territory of the Republic has remained under military occupation by Turkey. The Turkish occupation troops, instead of withdrawing after repeated calls by solemn Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, are increasing in number and modernizing their military equipment, thus posing not only a serious threat to the security of our region but also a challenge to the authority of the United Nations. The Secretary-General has stated in his reports to the Security Council that the area of Cyprus under occupation by the Turkish forces is the most militarized area in the world.

Another point of particular concern to us is the massive violation of the human rights of the displaced persons who were forcibly evicted from their homes by the Turkish occupation forces and whose homes and property have been usurped by illegal settlers imported from Turkey to Cyprus in an effort to change the demographic composition of our population and colonize the part of Cyprus occupied by the Turkish forces. All these flagrant human rights violations have been committed against my country despite a number of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions calling on all States to respect the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Cyprus and to avoid any actions which could change the demographic structure of the island.

Turkey's defiance extends also to resolutions calling for the withdrawal of foreign forces from the Republic of Cyprus, the return of the refugees to their homes under conditions of safety, the humanitarian issues of the missing persons and the implementation of the third Vienna agreement, regarding the living conditions and welfare of persons in enclaves in areas under the control of the Turkish occupation forces.

On this solemn occasion, I wish sincerely to express, on behalf of the people of Cyprus, the Government and myself, deep appreciation for the solidarity offered us by the Assembly. I ask that its most valuable support be reinforced with added emphasis, for it is high time the resolutions of the United Nations on Cyprus were implemented if a just and lasting solution is to be arrived at without further delay. We must remember that failure to uphold international law and respect for human rights in one situation sets a precedent for similar failures elsewhere, with often catastrophic consequences. Recent experiences have demonstrated this all too blatantly.

At every turning point in modern history, nations convene to shape a new world order. This is another such historic turning point, and the United Nations is the forum for the world order we must build. We have, I believe, a collective responsibility to understand the nature of the new, post-cold-war role of the United Nations, to continue our effort towards the institutional reforms needed to re-equip the United Nations for its role and to make commitments of the human and financial resources necessary for the United Nations to carry out effectively its mission. We believe that the topics of prime consideration should include the restructuring of the Security Council, the system of international security as provided for in the Charter, the further development and implementation of the basic concepts of An Agenda for Peace and An Agenda for Development and the finances of the United Nations.

It is now generally accepted that the Security Council's membership must be increased so as to become more representative of the Organization's membership. It is also recognized that it has to improve the effectiveness of its decision-making to deal with the challenges of international security in the future. Openness in its

proceedings, democratization in its decision-taking procedures, and broader consultation by the permanent members with non-permanent members and with those outside the Council whose interests are affected by a particular issue before it, will contribute to the effectiveness of this all-important United Nations body.

On the other hand, we should ensure that the General Assembly, the universal organ of the United Nations, where the sovereign equality of Member States is democratically depicted, be fully respected and utilized more, if we are to serve well the peoples of the world.

It is of paramount importance to recognize that, for peace and stability to be maintained and for democracy to be rooted, economic and social development is indispensable. That is why we welcome the efforts of the United Nations to answer social and economic problems, though the United Nations was created primarily as a political body to address political issues. Today, however, more than ever, we must face social and economic challenges, for it is not enough to bring forth the end of strife and violence. It has been correctly said that if we contain violence but ignore poverty we will sooner or later discover that we have simply traded one misery for another.

The historic Middle East accord offers a good example in this respect, where what has been achieved in the course of the peace process should be cemented by the economic support of the international community, thus ensuring a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Never in the history of mankind has the awareness of interdependence and globalism been so strong as it is today, and never has mankind had so much technological know-how at its disposal. Building upon the accumulation of 50 years of United Nations experience in multilateral relations and the everlasting principles and ideals of the United Nations Charter, we can and must do everything within our power to bequeath to coming generations a better world, where security, democracy, human rights and prosperity prevail and are shared by all.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Cyprus for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 ***(continued)***

General debate

The President: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lesotho, His Excellency, the Honourable Mr. Kelebone Maope.

Mr. Maope (Lesotho): Mr. President, it affords me great pleasure to congratulate you on your election to direct the work of this historic session of the General Assembly. Such an honour bears testimony to your undoubted dynamism and diplomatic skills, which will in no small measure bear on the outcome of the work of this Assembly.

Permit me also to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, of Cote d'Ivoire, for his outstanding leadership of the forty-ninth session. We congratulate him also on the many initiatives that he took in the furtherance of the work of our Organization.

Lastly, may I refer to the sterling work that the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros-Boutros Ghali, continues to do against great odds. His report on the work of the Organization in 1995 has painted in sharp relief the awesome task that faces us at the threshold of a new millennium and as we enter the second half-century of the United Nations existence.

The United Nations has been, and will always be, the symbol of humankind's fervent desire to conduct its affairs with the purpose of eternal survival. When the dark clouds of war threatened to engulf the world with a catastrophe of unimaginable proportions, humankind found strength within itself to negate the Armageddon. The pattern of large-scale wars involving many nations has been reversed, and the worst that we suffered in recent years was a cold war that was more psychologically than physically damaging. Happily, that is now behind us.

But, even as we stop to ponder and reflect on the past, a new pattern of ethnic intra-State conflagrations has emerged and continues to threaten the very survival of humanity. This new scenario has posed a serious challenge to the initiatives and peace-keeping capabilities of our Organization.

The record of the United Nations in the recent past in peace-keeping has been mixed. We have had unqualified successes in some places, but then in others

success has eluded us. Our resolve, therefore, has to be to shift the balance in favour of greater success. Our machinery for peacemaking and peace-keeping needs to be fine-tuned to maximum precision. The implications of this requirement are far-reaching and need to be appreciated in their amplitude.

First, the financing of peace-keeping operations must be put on a more secure footing. Persistent arrears, such as those we are currently experiencing, especially when they are incurred by major Powers, cannot but have an adverse effect on the morale of the small countries, such as my own, that make great sacrifices to meet their obligations to the Organization.

Secondly, greater attention should be paid to peace-making and preventive diplomacy, thereby reducing the prospects of conflicts, with their attendant costs. In this regard, the ideas contained in the Secretary-General's Supplement to An Agenda for Peace merit our close attention. The strategy of pre-empting the eruption of conflict is, of course, closely linked to the United Nations efforts in the fields of social and economic development, because it is in the soil of poverty that the seeds of national upheavals take root and sprout.

Last, but not least, the changed nature of the challenges facing the Security Council call for the restructuring of that organ to reflect the changed realities of present-day international relations. All the international peace-and-security matters of which the Council is currently seized pertain to developing countries or countries in transition. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that the composition of the Security Council should include an appropriate proportion of developing countries in both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

My delegation therefore supports the view that the reform of the Security Council should be in accordance with the following principles: one, the reform of the Security Council must not put in danger its effectiveness, but, on the contrary, should strengthen it; two, the enlargement of the Security Council should enhance its representative character, taking into account the emergence of new economic and political Powers as well as the increase of United Nations membership; three, the enlargement of the Security Council should enhance equitable geographic representation; four, the possibility of smaller Member States serving on the Security Council should not be diminished; and, lastly, the enlargement should take place in both categories of permanent and non-permanent members.

The Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council has continued to address the question of the reform of the Council. It is encouraging to note that discussions have shown a general support for the need to increase the membership of the Security Council, especially of developing countries, and a subsequent need to review the Council's composition. The general view is that the size and composition of an expanded Council should reflect more accurately the universal character of the United Nations and present-day realities.

It has further been recognized that the principle of the sovereign equality of all Members of the United Nations and the concepts of equitable representation and distribution, legitimacy, effectiveness and efficiency should serve as guiding principles for the reform of the Security Council.

A number of political questions continue to preoccupy us. In this regard, the leaders and people of Israel, Jordan and Palestine deserve our congratulations on having transformed the hopes and goals embodied in the Middle East peace process into tangible achievements. The people of Israel and the Palestinians have overcome formidable obstacles. Yet the most difficult and divisive issues still remain unresolved.

The peace process in that area of the Middle East is of the utmost importance and must therefore be negotiated against a backdrop of continuing and satisfactory progress. Only that will help give both Israel and Palestine the further confidence needed to make the political decisions that will ultimately achieve a lasting solution.

We also need to urge the international community to respond quickly, appropriately, generously, practically and flexibly to the needs of the Palestinian people. Achievements must match expectations.

In the tragic situation of the former Yugoslavia, the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina must be commended for accepting the peace proposal of the five-nation Contact Group, which has been endorsed by the Security Council. This peace proposal, as recent developments have indicated, does not sufficiently respond to the requirements of justice and equity, but we are none the less encouraged by a number of positive developments that have taken place.

We therefore urge the international community, in particular, the Security Council and the member States of the European Contact Group, to respond effectively to the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We hope that the logic of peace will finally overcome the logic of war, on the basis of the cease-fire, which is yet to come into effect.

In Africa, many significant developments have taken place in respect of peace-keeping that have to be understood in the context of changes in the international environment. The changes include the fatigue and reluctance of the leading world Powers, especially those in the Security Council, to participate in peace-keeping operations in Africa. That reluctance was exemplified by the events in Burundi, where the Organization of African Unity (OAU) had to deploy a limited observation mission because the United Nations could not.

On the other hand, however, some of the Western countries have launched several initiatives aimed at identifying ways in which the international community can assist Africa to cope with the challenges of conflict prevention and management. While Africa, in keeping with its determination to combat conflicts on the continent, is appreciative of these gestures from its outside partners, we wish to remind the international community of the United Nations primary role as the guardian of world peace and stability everywhere, including in Africa. Africa remains part of the international community, and the notion that "African problems need an African solution", as ome countries advocate, is erroneous. The determination of Africa to address, through the OAU, the problem of conflicts on the continent should not be misconstrued as absolving the United Nations from its responsibility for peace and security where Africa is concerned.

The Sahraoui people have a right to self-determination. We therefore appeal to all parties to respect the decision to hold a referendum in Western Sahara, to be held as scheduled in January 1996.

My delegation believes that the key to attaining nuclear disarmament and a nuclear-free world continues to be the universality of the non-proliferation regime. In this connection, therefore, I wish to register my delegation's strong rejection of nuclear tests, which are clearly inconsistent with the decision of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regarding the principles and objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, which committed all States to work towards the elimination of nuclear weapons and to exercise the utmost restraint with respect to nuclear testing. We call on all nuclear-weapon States to refrain from any further testing.

We express our deep disappointment at the lack of concrete results on the question of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade.

It is important to note that at its forty-ninth session the General Assembly adopted resolution 49/75 B of 15 December 1994, in which it decided to undertake, at its fiftieth session, such a review and appraisal. The Assembly requested the Disarmament Commission, at its 1995 session, to make a preliminary assessment of the implementation of the Declaration and of suggestions that might be put forth to ensure appropriate progress. We regret to note that despite extensive efforts to agree on consensus language, there was a divergence of views and it was not possible to reach a consensus. It is disappointing to note that delegations were not willing to engage in serious negotiations to find even small areas of common ground.

In recent decades the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has also adopted a number of other resolutions on disarmament and on the denuclearization of the African continent. Convinced that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones can contribute to the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime, the sixtieth ordinary session of the OAU Council of Ministers adopted a resolution in which the OAU Secretary-General was requested to convene a joint meeting of the Organization of African Unity inter-governmental group of experts and the Group of Experts to Prepare a Draft Treaty on an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone set up jointly by the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations. This initiative needs the unrelenting support of the international community, in particular that of the nuclear-weapon States, through their accession to the protocols that concern them in connection with the reduction and prohibition of the use and testing of all weapons of mass destruction.

My Government, like the Governments of all African States, is convinced that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones worldwide, through the encouragement of the United Nations — especially in the Middle East, as already proposed by Egypt — would enhance the security of Africa and the subsequent viability of the African nuclear-weapon-free zone.

In the social and human rights field, the United Nations continues to make some progress. The World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen in March, was a milestone in humankind's quest for consensus on universal standards for social development. The implementation of the undertakings which the Heads of State or Government made needs to be monitored closely in order to assess the degree of progress being made in achieving those undertakings. In this regard, the 20/20 compact is an important step in the direction of international collaboration to achieve balanced development of the social sector. It is the intention of my Government to fulfil its commitment to allocate 20 per cent of its development budgetary allocation to the social sector; we expect our development partners to meet us half way in this endeavour.

The outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women is still very fresh in our minds, having been achieved only a few weeks ago. Although it was unfortunate that some countries found it necessary to enter reservations in respect of certain paragraphs of the Platform for Action, we are encouraged that a significant step forward was taken towards the goal of recognizing the right of women to be equal partners with men and to have complete control over all aspects of their lives. The triple goals of equality, development and peace, enunciated 20 years ago in Mexico City, underscore the undeniable truth that development and peace are not feasible while half of the world's population is discriminated against and not allowed to realize its full potential. My delegation reaffirms our Government's determination to forge ahead with vigour with the implementation of the Platform for Action until the full emancipation of women is attained. In this connection, I should like to call for an early follow-up and review conference lest the momentum generated in Beijing be lost.

There is a widely held myth that the developing world is experiencing a high growth rate because of the remarkable economic performance of East Asia. How can this be true when a total of 47 developing countries classified as least-developed countries continue to fight for survival? These countries account for 10 per cent of the world's population but earn only 0.1 per cent of the global income. For over two decades now, they have continued to experience serious declines in per capita income. Their share of world trade has declined from 0.6 per cent in 1980 to 0.2 per cent in 1992.

Africa continues to be the region most in need of help. The 1995 economic growth indicators, however, present an encouraging picture. For the first time in over six years, the economic-growth rate is projected to match the population-growth rate, which is, unfortunately, the highest in the world.

Africa has been used over the past 20 years, and is still being used, as a policy laboratory for the Bretton Woods institutions. It is regrettable that today, as the United Nations celebrates its fiftieth year since the signing of the Organization's Charter in San Francisco, many people in Africa continue to live under even harsher conditions of poverty, hunger, disease, civil war and natural disaster. The plight of the African continent remains a major challenge for the emerging world order. There is an urgent need for a stronger consolidated effort to pull the continent out of the poverty trap into which it continues to sink.

A few months ago at Geneva, the Economic and Social Council, at the high-level segment of its 1995 substantive session, deliberated an item entitled "The development of Africa, including the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s". The high-level segment recognized that, among all the five regions of the world, Africa continues to be the only one lagging far behind in terms of development and that it remains the most marginalized in the world economy.

Allow me at this juncture to take this opportunity to applaud the Government of National Unity of the Republic of South Africa for having embarked on a reconstruction and development programme as a strategy for tackling the thorny issue of the economic imbalances created by the policies of apartheid. It is important for the international community to realize that the entire southern African subregion was as much affected and that it still suffers from the impact of the apartheid legacy. Any international support for the implementation of the reconstruction and development programme in South Africa should take this fact into account.

The southern African States members of the Southern African Development Community continue to pay priority attention to closer and stronger integration of their economies. The international community should make its best endeavours to ensure that our efforts are adequately supported through complementary financial and technological support, including improved terms of trade, increased flows of direct foreign investment and appropriate debt relief measures.

Lesotho, as a land-locked and least developed country, attaches great importance to issues of concern to the least developing countries, particularly their transit transport problems. We welcome the adoption by the intergovernmental meeting of the land-locked and transit developing countries, donor countries and financial institutions of a framework for cooperation to alleviate transit transport problems of the land-locked States and of their transit neighbours. It is our sincere belief that this session of the General Assembly will seriously address itself to the provisions of this framework, with a view to speeding up their implementation.

The Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s remains largely unimplemented. Lesotho, as a least developed country, is seriously concerned about this.

In Lesotho, as in many other countries in Africa and other regions, we have undertaken far-reaching political reforms, thus heeding the international clarion call to restore democratic administration, popular participation, accountability and good governance. These reforms have been undertaken amidst painful but necessary structural adjustment programmes intended to improve our macroeconomic policies and structures. The international community needs to realize that the success and sustainability of all these reforms cannot be guaranteed unless they bring about tangible results and satisfy the expectations of our people, particularly the most disadvantaged.

Our cooperating partners, in the forefront of advocates of democratic rule, seem to be relinquishing their responsibility of seeing to it that democratic institutions are sustained. In most of our countries our fledgling democracies face the serious challenge posed by lack of resources initially promised by our friends. We see emerging in each of our countries pockets of discontent which in essence challenge and destabilize the very shaky foundations of our young democracies. We in Lesotho understand very well the complementarity of democracy and development, and it is on this basis that we call upon our partners to carry out as a matter of urgency their international responsibility, particularly in this area.

For two consecutive years now, Lesotho has been experiencing an unprecedented devastating drought, which has adversely affected food production. This year the quantity of acreage cultivated was substantially reduced, due to lack of rainfall. As a result of the drought, the Government had to declare a state of food emergency and send urgent appeals to our traditional and new food donors for a helping hand. Unfortunately, not very encouraging responses have so far been received. It is therefore my humble duty and responsibility to renew this appeal to the international community through the Assembly.

Today's world is increasingly being made smaller and smaller by technological advances. Developments in one part of the world are of direct relevance and interest to other parts of the world. Closer cooperation and collaboration between partners is more urgently needed than ever before. South-South cooperation has to be further strengthened and universalized. In this regard, the importance of triangular arrangements for promoting and expanding South-South cooperation cannot be over-emphasized. Furthermore, increased transfer of modern productive and efficient technologies is a necessary condition for all the nations of the world to be able to fulfil their obligations and commitment to leave man's common heritage — the Earth — in a condition that will enable future generations to sustain life on it.

Many of us are doing our best to develop the full potential of our human resources through education, good health, a clean living and working environment and nutrition. We have put in place appropriate policies to ensure the realization of this noble objective. We are worried about slow progress towards the discovery of a permanent cure for the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and would urge all humankind not to spare any effort or resources until this menace has been vanquished. We therefore join the appeals for increased political commitment and financial and material support for scientific and other research that will lead to the discovery of a cure for this disease.

For a long time the nations of the world have expressed their desire to enhance the international justice system. The recognition that an international criminal court was an essential element in building respect for human rights throughout the world led the Members of the United Nations nearly half a century ago to pledge to create a new system of international justice. Progress in this regard has, however, been slow.

The atrocities in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda provided an impetus to establish a permanent international criminal court. Lesotho supports the view that a permanent international criminal court should be established by 1996. We believe that the most practical method of establishing such a court is by a multilateral

treaty that would enter into force following ratification by a reasonable number of States. It is our fervent belief that such a court would be the living embodiment of the fundamental principles of international criminal law. Besides being able to hold individual perpetrators of human rights violations personally liable, the court would complement prosecutions in national courts by acting when States were unwilling or unable to bring perpetrators to justice.

The commendable efforts of the International Law Commission in preparing the draft statute for the court are to be applauded. It now remains for Governments and other organs of civil society to strengthen the draft statute to ensure that it is a model of justice, fairness and effectiveness.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Jordan, His Excellency Mr. Abdul-Karim Kabariti.

Mr. Kabariti (Jordan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to begin my statement by congratulating you, Sir, and on the Government and people of your country, Portugal, on your election as President of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, which coincides with the Golden Jubilee of the United Nations. I am confident that, with your skill and expertise in diplomacy and international affairs, you will be able to steer the deliberations of this session most efficiently and competently.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I should like also to extend deep appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, for successfully conducting the affairs of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Allow me also to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his sincere, incessant and dedicated efforts in the service of the international community through this Organization.

Over the past few years, the world order has witnessed radical changes in its structure that have entailed developments some of which have been positive while others have been negative. On the positive side, wide-ranging developments have been seen in many States with regard to the emergence of democracy, political plurality, respect for human rights and basic freedoms. Such developments have been accompanied by a natural yearning for the achievement of development in both its economic and social domains, while developments on the negative side have generated a wider cycle of racial, national and religious disputes in some regions of the world that have led to a noticeable retreat from respect for human rights and basic freedoms of the human individual, as well as regression of development both in the economic and social spheres. The primary task of this Organization at this point in time is, perhaps, to focus on strengthening the first tendency and to limit, as much as possible, the second.

In the face of such a challenge, the task of reforming the United Nations should be met with a view to strengthening its role, making it more effective and achieving a qualitative transformation of the work of its organs. The Security Council stands in need of restructuring with a view to increasing its membership in such a way as to reflect balanced representation of developed and developing countries. The present composition of the Council, as it took shape in the wake of World War II, no longer reflects the present balance of power in its broader sense. Any expansion of the permanent membership of the Council should take into account the inclusion of countries from the developing world which have significant political, economic and demographic weight.

On the other hand, the veto prerogative of the five permanent Member States should be reviewed and certain Council mechanisms must be substantively reformed as in the case of the mechanism relating to economic sanctions. Reform of that mechanism should ensure: firstly, limiting as much as possible the impact of sanctions on the civilian population of the country on which the sanctions are imposed, and secondly, compensating third States that are affected by the sanctions in proportion to the damage sustained by them.

It is also necessary to achieve the universality of the United Nations in conformity with Article 4, paragraph 1, of the Charter, which stipulates that membership in the United Nations is open to all peace-loving nations which accept the obligations contained in the Charter. Membership should not be denied on the basis of any political or other considerations.

Peace-keeping operations have become the cornerstone of the overall work and activities of the United Nations. While my country, Jordan, prides itself on its wide-ranging participation in the operations, it deems it

necessary to continue the process of comprehensively reviewing peace-keeping operations in the light of the widening scope and number of such operations, as well as the diverse nature of the tasks undertaken by the peace-keepers and the dangers they are exposed to.

At the same time, we emphasize the need to strengthen the efforts made to consolidate the foundations and bases of preventive diplomacy which aims to avert the break-out or escalation of conflicts, in addition to developing the machinery for post-conflict peacemaking and peace-building.

As for the financial crisis which has impacted on peace-keeping operations, that crisis not only affects proper implementation and the level of performance, but affects also the participation of many developing countries in those operations. Those countries have now become reluctant to participate because they have not been reimbursed on time. If such a situation persists, it may impact adversely on the desired comprehensive international character of the structure of peace-keeping troops and lead to the exclusion of developing countries therefrom, thus restricting participation to the developed countries that are financially able to bear the cost of their participation.

The only solution to this problem is for all countries to meet their financial obligations on time, particularly those countries that contribute the bulk of the United Nations budget. Jordan has supported the establishment of a special fund to help start new operations whenever needed. Part of the capital of this fund should be earmarked for the reimbursement of the developing countries that participate in such operations. In this regard, we feel that amendments need to be made to the reimbursement mechanism, so that the developing countries contributing troops to peace-keeping operations may be reimbursed on a priority basis.

The end of the East-West bipolarity that plagued the world during the cold war and the disappearance of the ideological demarcation line that divided the world into two camps should prompt us to seize this historic opportunity afforded us by the current transitional period to lay down new foundations for North-South cooperation and to narrow the economic gap between them. The first step in that direction may well be to find substantive and meaningful solutions to the problem of the accumulated debts of the developing countries.

While my country welcomed the establishment of the World Trade Organization and has applied for membership, we call for an in-depth study of the foundations and controls upon which freedom of trade is built. We also call for a review of the strategies of economic development at the international level, with a view to improving them in conformity with the principles of sustainable development and to achieve the cherished goal of environmental conservation.

While world peace and stability are among the most important prerequisites for economic development and of the social development it entails, the development cycle, however, will not be complete without consolidating the underpinnings of democracy and social justice which lead to further development and thereby promote peace and stability.

Proceeding from His Majesty King Hussein's belief in the close relationship between peace, democracy and development, Jordan's earnest participation in the peace process went hand in hand with the strengthening of democracy and the consolidation of political plurality in Jordan. As is known, the peace process which started in Madrid four years ago has resulted, *inter alia*, in the conclusion of the Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty, which restored to Jordan all its territorial and water rights and laid the foundation for a balanced relationship based on mutual and equal interests between Israel and Jordan. This, of course, reflects positively on the peace, stability and welfare of the peoples of the region.

Efforts are now under way to bring about a huge qualitative jump in regional economic development in the Middle East. The States of the region are showing great interest in the Amman Economic Summit, which is scheduled to be held at the end of this month, October 1995, within the framework of regional cooperation, as a product of the multilateral track of the peace process.

Jordan looks forward with optimism to the forthcoming Barcelona Conference with the aim of establishing a partnership that joins together the Mediterranean States. This would contribute to the consolidation of the comprehensive peace process in the Middle East. In this respect, I should like to express deep gratitude and appreciation for the role played by Europe, Japan and other States involved in the multilateral track of the peace process which, together with the United States of America, support the development efforts in Jordan and of peace-building in the region.

Jordan's participation in the multilateral track of the peace process stems from its conviction that it is

necessary to find effective solutions to the problems that have accumulated over the many years of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Foremost among those problems is the question of refugees. In this regard, we commend the outstanding role played by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), stress the importance of that role and of the essential services the Agency provides for the refugees. Accordingly, my country, as host to the largest number of refugees, feels that it is necessary for UNRWA's work to continue and indeed for the services it provides to be expanded. This, in turn, necessitates the strengthening of UNRWA's budget, until a final solution to the refugee problem is reached through return and compensation, as provided for in the United Nations resolutions and principles of international law. Therefore, while we acknowledge the donor States' contributions, we call upon them, from this rostrum, to continue to contribute to UNRWA's budget, so that this noble goal may be achieved.

On the other hand, my country supports all efforts to advance the negotiations on other bilateral tracks in order to realize the principle of "the return of land for peace" on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), which constitute the essential terms of reference for the peace process.

On this occasion, I should like to commend the very important development on the Palestinian-Israeli track with the conclusion of the Taba Agreement on the expansion of self-government in the West Bank and the subsequent signing of that agreement in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995.

I should like also to take this opportunity to express Jordan's full support for the Palestinian National Authority in its sincere efforts to achieve the goals of a just and durable peace in the region. We believe that those efforts will lead to the establishment of the independent State of Palestine, with the holy city of Al-Quds as its capital, in realization of the hopes and aspirations of the brotherly Palestinian people.

My delegation did not spare any effort during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in order for the Conference to produce positive results that would buttress this treaty which is a major cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime, and may bring about its universality by the accession thereto of all States, including Israel, and the placement of its nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as the provision of adequate security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States.

In addition to the decision to extend the treaty indefinitely and to strengthen the review process, the Conference also adopted a resolution on the Middle East which called, *inter alia*, for taking the necessary measures to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region.

Jordan has participated actively and in good faith in all the regional talks concerning arms control and regional security within the multilateral track of the peace process. We hope that these talks will achieve their goals, namely, the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and an end to the regional arms race in the area of conventional weapons. These efforts have started to bear fruit recently with the decision to establish three regional security centres in Amman, Doha and Tunis. We must emphasize here that the activation of these centres does not at all mean acceptance of the status quo with all its inherent imbalances, particularly with regard to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The main objective that inspired the establishment of those centres was to promote confidence-building amongst the States of the region and to redress the present imbalances in order to achieve a more secure and stable Middle East, as provided for in the Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty.

At the international level, we hope that the ongoing negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva will lead to concluding a comprehensive test-ban treaty before the end of next year. We also hope that the Conference on Disarmament will begin negotiations aimed at concluding a treaty on prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, and another convention to provide non-nuclear-weapon States with security assurances.

As for the situation in the Gulf, Jordan reaffirms its interest in the security of that vital region and its earnest desire to establish strong relations of cooperation based on mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of any State. In this regard, Jordan firmly supports and upholds the right of the United Arab Emirates to sovereignty over the three islands occupied by Iran. Jordan also supports all efforts aiming at bringing about an end to the Iranian occupation so that good neighbourly relations among the States of the region may be established and consolidated.

While we appreciate the positive step taken by Iraq in recognizing the sovereignty of Kuwait and its international boundaries, we emphasize the need to work for lifting the sanctions imposed on the brotherly people of Iraq, with a view to putting an end to their suffering, preserving the unity and the integrity of the people and the territory of Iraq and preventing its fragmentation which would endanger the security and safety of the region. Jordan also stresses the need to resolve the issue of the missing and detained Kuwaitis. We consider this a matter of utmost importance because of its legal and humanitarian dimensions. We call for Iraq's full compliance with all relevant Security Council resolutions in order to discharge the commitment to properly implement Council resolutions in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Having said this, Jordan affirms its solidarity with and sympathy for the Iraqi people in their plight and underscores the need to respect their legitimate rights and aspirations to freedom and democracy and to safeguard their unity. Jordan states this with a clear conscience, in consonance with the Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United Nations.

Jordan has consistently made clear its stand on the tragic situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It supports the sovereignty and independence of this young republic and affirms the need to put an end to the Serbian aggression against it. Jordan also supported the position of the Contact Group established by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which called for the lifting of the arms embargo imposed on Bosnia, in conformity with its inherent right to self-defence. Now, following the latest positive developments, represented by the Declaration of Principles agreed upon by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the States parties to the conflict under the auspices of the Western Contact Group and following the cease-fire decision, Jordan supports the position of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and commends its flexibility in trying to reach agreement. We attach great importance to the continuation of diplomacy supported by force, which has led to the withdrawal by the Serbs of their heavy weapons from the areas surrounding the capital city of Sarajevo, with all that that entailed in terms of putting an end to the shelling of civilians, and of leading to the aforementioned Declaration of Principles.

While we are to work in earnest for the establishment of a safer and more secure world order that would be founded on the values of freedom, tolerance and equality, we must recall the early calls made by Jordan during the 1980s, when His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan called for the establishment of a new humanitarian world order. Those calls were echoed in the proceedings of the United Nations General Assembly and translated into resolutions which called for and encouraged the establishment and consolidation of such a world order. Perhaps this new humanitarian world order, because of its aims which would make the human being the main focus of international action in such areas as the eradication of poverty and unemployment and the bridging of the gap between the rich and the poor, on both the individual and societal levels, may well furnish the solid foundation upon which we can build the desired new world order whose parameters have not crystallized as yet.

In the same context, we should encourage interfaith dialogue. Such a dialogue would bridge the gaps between the beliefs and concepts of millions of human beings and, also, would make great strides towards advancing human development. If achieved, this would limit religious, sectoral and ethnic conflicts, both internally and amongst various communities at the international level. Perhaps there is a window of opportunity now afforded by the end of the cold war and of ideological and political conflicts. This could be a rare and historic opportunity to activate an interfaith dialogue, thus adding a new and valuable forum to the existing forums of dialogue.

We in Jordan have always advocated interfaith dialogue as a safe way to combat blind bigotry and stereotyping. In order to achieve this, and in the midst of the painful labour that the process of establishing the new world order is undergoing, we must not marginalize one billion Muslims, exclude them or eventually drive them to radicalism. Muslims must be partners in the building of this new world order and must be actively involved in its development.

Islam's bright image is being distorted, which is a matter of grave concern for us. The pervasive anti-Islamic phenomenon, based on unjustified generalizations, aims at tarnishing the good name of Muslims and stigmatizing them as terrorists and blind extremists, with a view to totally distorting Islam's image. This matter must receive greater attention from this international Organization. One should not ignore the fact that Islam is an adaptable civilization, comprising all shades of political opinion and all kinds of different religious thought, in addition to a vast, multifaceted human experience. Jordan urges the Member States of this international Organization to try to reach a better

understanding of Islam as a religion, as a culture and as a civilization, and to reject the phenomenon of antagonism to Islam in all its forms and manifestations.

In conclusion, the road to a world of peace, security and stability inhabited by democratic societies, a world whose main goal is to attain the highest level of economic and social development, is a long and arduous road indeed. But the achievement of these lofty and noble aims of the Charter of the United Nations is worthy of our sacrifices, and requires more serious and sincere action at the international level.

The Acting President (*Interpretation from Arabic*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana, His Excellency Mr. Obed Asamoah.

Mr. Reyn (Belgium), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Asamoah (Ghana): We are very pleased that Mr. Freitas do Amaral is presiding over this important occasion, not only because of our confidence in his sterling qualities and acknowledged capabilities, but also because of the long historic links between Portugal and Ghana — links going back 500 years. We wish him every success in conducting the affairs of this fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

To his predecessor, my brother and colleague from Côte d'Ivoire, we say "thank you" for a job well done. He led us through very complicated and difficult issues, such as the restructuring and reform of the United Nations, particularly the enlargement of the Security Council. The patience, equanimity and skill which he displayed throughout his presidency won the admiration of us all.

To Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, we say a special word of thanks and appreciation for his indefatigable energy, his remarkable commitment to the independence of the United Nations and his steadfast resolve to help carry the Organization forward on a sounder footing.

Fifty years of life, be it of a person or an institution, is an appropriate occasion for celebration and we are all looking forward to the festivities planned for the latter part of this month in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. It must also, however, be an occasion for a sober assessment of success and progress attained, as well as an in-depth analysis of the shortcomings experienced and how best to overcome them.

In 1945, 51 States, by signing the United Nations Charter and setting up the Organization, ushered in a new era in international affairs. I recall that only four African countries were Members of the United Nations at its inception. Today, the United Nations comprises 185 Member States, of which, perhaps, Africa is the continent with the largest representation.

The very fact that the United Nations has grown in the past 50 years to encompass in its membership almost all sovereign States of the international community indicates a positive development. This is important because of the growing interdependence of States and the common interest of the international community in the solution of the complex and myriad issues of contemporary life.

To those who criticize the United Nations and the General Assembly in particular as a mere talking shop, I would say that the tradition of discussion and debate, of listening to and appreciating the views of others is of great value. This is precisely the rationale for setting up this forum. It is only through such a process that diverse views can be harmonized and compromises struck. But even the sceptic will admit that the United Nations has an appreciable record of humanitarian and social improvement throughout the globe, in decolonization and in the settlement of disputes and conflicts.

Our hope that the end of the cold war would bring in its train a new era of enduring peace and international harmony has been rudely dispelled. Much has indeed changed but much remains the same. The perennial conflicts of the past are taking new and troubling dimensions with "ethnic cleansing", genocide and strident forms of nationalism threatening international tranquillity. This fiftieth anniversary is the appropriate occasion for all States to ponder carefully how these problems can be effectively contained. We are encouraged by recent events to hope that the ugly conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina can and will be solved, and we must pay tribute to the United States for this development.

We also note with appreciation the recent Israeli-Palestinian accords signed in Washington as another milestone in the progress towards genuine peace in the Middle East. We would, however, urge all parties to show more flexibility and understanding in ensuring a comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem, which, *inter alia*, would include full self-determination for the Palestinian people and the restoration of occupied Arab lands.

No conflict can be resolved without the willingness of the parties to be reasonable and ready for compromise. The Afghans, the Somalis and others stand in danger of neglect and they must wake up to this reality. The leaders of the warring parties in these countries must appreciate the enormous responsibility on their shoulders not to condemn their compatriots to senseless slaughter in perpetuity.

The developing countries generally find themselves in difficult economic circumstances as a result of an unfavourable international economic climate. The need for concerted international action to restructure the international economy in order to meet the challenges of absolute poverty, malnutrition, disease and illiteracy, among others, in the developing countries cannot be overemphasized. In this context, we appreciate the limited success of the important global conferences of the past year, especially that on population and development in Cairo, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and, last but not least, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The very fact that the international community has been able to improve and agree on a set of guidelines for future action in each of these vitally important social areas is in itself a remarkable achievement. We trust that the necessary political will to implement what has been agreed upon will be exercised by all.

Allow me to say a few words about last April's review and extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We note with regret that, so soon after the indefinite extension of the NPT, the very fears which made some of us question the wisdom of an indefinite extension have been fulfilled by the resumption of nuclear testing in the Pacific. We had argued that an indefinite extension would leave the nuclear Powers with no real incentive to make further progress on the arms control agenda. We must condemn in no uncertain terms the breach of the underlying implications of the consensus reached on the indefinite extension of the NPT. Let us hope that lessons will be learned from the almost universal condemnation of the French tests and that there will be movement towards a rapid conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty and action on the other major issues in the area of disarmament.

United Nations peace-keeping continues to assume great prominence in the range of United Nations activities. This has been in clear response to urgent needs in various parts of the world, and we in Ghana continue to try to make a modest contribution through participation in such missions as that in Rwanda. We are pleased to note that a lot of thinking is going on about how to improve and strengthen the United Nations peace-keeping role. We will continue to take an active part in these discussions and we hope it will be possible to agree on new arrangements that will be to the benefit of us all.

Allow me, on this issue, to express my delegation's profound regret at the delay of the United Nations in reimbursing troop- contributing countries, such as mine, for expenditures incurred in United Nations peace-keeping operations. We urge that every effort be made to resolve this matter as speedily as possible. Of course, it will help greatly if Member States in arrears in their contributions honour their obligations and pay up. We urge them to do so without further delay.

While on the subject of peace-keeping, may I say a few words about what we in West Africa have tried to do in Liberia. In the spirit of the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter and the Treaty setting up the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), ECOWAS countries took the initiative to set up the cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to stop the bloodshed in Liberia. Today we are pleased to see that the Abuja and earlier agreements have made possible the restoration of relative peace in that country. The challenge now is to see through the implementation process. That will require a considerable increase in troop strength, logistics for ECOMOG and for the encampment, disarmament and resettlement of rival forces engaged in the civil war. International assistance is greatly needed to meet these objectives. It is hoped that a ready response will be forthcoming at the pledging conference envisaged for later this month.

What ECOMOG has done in Liberia is a good example of how subregional and regional organizations should support the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. But the United Nations will need to overcome doctrinal obstacles and to develop principles that will facilitate hybrid operations involving subregional initiatives and United Nations financing in whole or in part.

On Rwanda, Ghana has again demonstrated the depth of its commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security by sending troops to the front line. Our actions speak louder than words. Liberia and Rwanda are the latest in a long history of Ghanaian participation in peace-keeping operations. We will continue to make a contribution whenever and wherever we are called upon to assist. That is why Ghana

sponsored the preparation of the Anglo-French glossary of peace-keeping terms, which provides precise terminology for vital words regularly used in the actual theatre of operations. Our gratitude goes to the British, French and Senegalese Governments, who all helped make the exercise a success.

Africa's economic problems are too well known for me to recount. Allow me to state that some of us are beginning to wonder about the seriousness of the international community in helping Africa help itself. Conference after conference and seminar after seminar have been held in the past few years on this issue. Study after study by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and numerous other institutions and distinguished personalities have been published, dissecting every dimension of the continent's problems.

African countries have committed themselves repeatedly to carry out far-reaching economic and institutional reforms, on the express understanding that their efforts would be fully complemented by the requisite material support of the international community, particularly the advanced countries.

While not down-playing the assistance Africa has received in the past few years, I must register the profound disappointment of many of us on the continent that the expected volume of assistance has never been forthcoming. Moreover, the requisite action on the debt and aid fronts, which would have completed the picture, has also not been adequate.

This is all the more regrettable because of the profound political risks that many Governments in Africa have run by faithfully implementing painful structural adjustment programmes that have had a severe impact on their peoples. It is also unfortunate because Africa has seen a tremendous upsurge of popular empowerment which has found expression in the establishment of constitutional rule in country after country. Let it not appear that the international community deliberately wishes to marginalize the African continent. The problem of poverty of the African continent, if not tackled seriously, could pose grave dangers to international peace and security. Many conflicts in Africa are occasioned by the strains of development and they could easily take on international dimensions.

As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, let us seek to fight against the arrogance of power and the return to the habits of colonialism as exhibited in the unjustified economic blockade against Cuba and the sanctions imposed on Libya. Such actions, particularly when sponsored by the United Nations, will serve to undermine the integrity of this Organization. The collapse of the cold war must make us more vigilant against any attempt to turn the United Nations into an instrument of the foreign policy of any one country or group of countries. When that happens, regional and subregional organizations will be tempted to question and/or disobey the decisions of the United Nations. This will be a tragic development that must be avoided at all costs. That is why Ghana, like other members of the OAU, calls upon the Security Council to lift the sanctions imposed unjustifiably on Libya and seek a peaceful solution to the Lockerbie affair and other related matters. We must of course forever maintain an uncompromising resolve to fight mindless terrorism.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Ghana's commitment to the United Nations as the best hope for peace and international cooperation. Long live the United Nations.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, His Excellency Mr. Tserenpiliin Gombosuren.

Mr. Gombosuren (Mongolia): May I be permitted to offer to His Excellency Mr. Freitas do Amaral my sincere congratulations on his election to the high post of President of the golden fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that, under his able stewardship, the Assembly will succeed in advancing the noble aims and objectives of our Charter. I wish also to record my delegation's profound appreciation to his predecessor, Ambassador Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, who presided most ably over the various activities of our Assembly during the forty-ninth session.

The year 1995 is to be singled out for its landmark anniversaries. The fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War is being observed worldwide with a renewed sense of comprehension of its painful lessons.

This coincides with the golden jubilee of the founding of the United Nations, which embodies in its Charter the aspirations of our forefathers who, having stood actual witnesses to the horrors of a most devastating war, pledged to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and settle international disputes by peaceful means.

At the time of this historic celebration it is only fitting to pay tribute to the architects of the Charter, whose vision inspired it with continued viability and validity.

The family of the United Nations has come to embrace 185 sovereign States, a fact that unequivocally attests to the genuine universality and validity of its underlying purposes and principles. The world Organization has throughout served as a powerful engine for bringing about dramatic changes both in the domain of international relations and in the development process of nations.

The United Nations is to be credited with impressive accomplishments in strengthening international peace and security, marshalling the efforts of the international community to put an end to colonialism and apartheid, ensuring the independence and sovereignty of developing countries and supporting their socio-economic development, advocating human rights and fundamental freedoms and protecting and preserving the environment, as well as in promoting education, culture, science and health.

It can be said that at the heart of these accomplishments lies the international community's growing realization of the prevalence of global priorities and the objective trends in historical developments, along with the wisdom of mastering the philosophy of fine-tuning the differing interests of States.

However, the book of the Organization's half-century history does not consist exclusively of success stories. There are chapters portraying the set-backs and failures of the United Nations when it was effectively handicapped by the then prevalent ideological antagonisms and military-bloc confrontation. There were times when sovereign States could not exercise their right to become Members of the United Nations. Mongolia, for one, which steadfastly sided with the Allied forces and other peace-loving nations during the Second World War, and made its humble contribution to the great victory, was until 1961 prevented from exercising its legitimate right to join the world Organization.

The upcoming solemn celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations by the largest ever gathering of world leaders demonstrates that the international community, by associating its present and its future with the United Nations, is placing its hopes and aspirations in the Organization. We hope that the special commemorative meeting will be crowned with the adoption of the visionary document reaffirming the underlying purposes and principles of the Charter and outlining forward-looking strategies commensurate with the challenges of the new millennium. In this regard, the Secretary-General's stimulating reports "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development" and their subsequent supplements help greatly in revamping our concepts of peace, security and development, as well as in our collective reflection on our future.

The United Nations has served as a catalyst for convening a series of global conferences — conferences on the protection of children, on the environment, on human rights, on population and social development and on the advancement of women — resulting in the formulation of common strategies and specific platforms for action, now and into the twenty-first century. In order to ensure the full implementation of this comprehensive strategy of sustainable human development it is imperative to streamline the existing machinery for multilateral cooperation. Here, I wish to emphasize the urgent need for reform to take in the entire system of the United Nations, including the Bretton Woods institutions, by, *inter alia*, increasing the effectiveness of organizations in the economic and social fields, as well as improving their coordination.

Momentous post-cold-war change has, in fact, failed to embrace international economic relations — an area of major concern to the United Nations. The persisting inequities and imbalances, as well as protectionist tendencies, the growing external-debt burden, the inability to participate equally in international decision-making and declining official development assistance flows, weigh heavily on the efforts of the developing countries effectively to address the pressing socio-economic problems that they face.

Mongolia fully supports the efforts of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 to call the attention of the international community, and of the Group of Seven in particular, to the question of addressing these acute problems. It goes without saying that this common objective can be attained only through joint North-South action.

The persistence and proliferation of wars and crisis situations testify to the fact that conventional attitudes towards the use of force as a standard means of settling disputes have not been done away with and that the worth of the human person and his or her right to life continue to be denied.

Against this backdrop, the United Nations has seen over the last few years a marked expansion in its activities in the area of peace-keeping, peacemaking and preventive diplomacy. Despite the difficulties encountered and the growing complexity of their missions, the peace-keeping operations have largely succeeded in places where they have intervened for the purposes of restoring peace and normality. The failures suffered by the United Nations should not, however, frustrate its efforts in the future. Lessons drawn from these failures should help the Organization to weigh its potentials and limitations realistically and to act within mandates that are clear and attainable.

If the Security Council is to reflect today's realities and to live up to the challenges ahead, the reform process — democratization of its working methods and the introduction of greater transparency into its activities — should be further intensified. It is Mongolia's considered view that expansion of the Security Council should be based on the principles of fairness and equitable representation. This should be ensured by, *inter alia*, the admission of countries with a global reach, like Japan and Germany, as well as representatives of developing countries.

It is important to take specific steps to ensure the full implementation of the resolution on the protection and security of small States adopted at the last session. Mongolia welcomes the Secretary-General's report on the specific development needs of small Member States, and expects that the ideas and recommendations that it contains will be duly reflected in the activities of the United Nations.

Mongolia highly appreciates the international community's understanding of the problems and hardships faced by countries in transition and the support for their efforts to integrate into the world economy. We deem it important that the General Assembly has decided to consider this issue at its fifty-first session. My delegation hopes that the report on this subject to be prepared by the Secretary-General will take due account of the characteristics of all countries — in particular, geographic location, climatic conditions and infrastructure development, among others.

We applaud the entry into force of the Convention on the Law of the Sea, which is widely acclaimed as one of the historic achievements of United Nations cooperative efforts. There is no need to emphasize the importance of that Convention to countries like Mongolia, which is a geographically disadvantaged, land-locked developing country with an unfavourable road and transportation environment.

The Mongolian delegation expresses its hope that the General Assembly will at its present session endorse the recommendations adopted last June by the Second Meeting of Governmental Experts from Land-locked and Transit Developing Countries and Representatives of Donor Countries and Financial and Development Institutions.

We believe that the World Trade Organization will facilitate the integration of developing countries into the international trading system and ensure the protection of their interests through benefits derived from the trade-discipline mechanism.

The disarmament agenda was highlighted this year by the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which considered the operation of the Treaty and decided on its indefinite extension.

Among the important objectives and principles aimed at strengthening the nuclear disarmament process with practical measures, special mention should be made of those related to the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. It is, however, deplorable that two nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, contrary to the commitments undertaken, are conducting nuclear tests and have announced their intention to continue them. A zero-yield comprehensive test-ban recently announced by the United States Administration will, in our view, speed up the negotiations on the treaty so that it may be concluded next year.

We wish to express our concern over the slow pace of ratification of the chemical weapons Convention, which is unnecessarily delaying its entry into force. We call upon those countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Convention as soon as possible.

Mongolia welcomes the interim agreement on the second stage of autonomy reached by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel within the framework of achieving the full realization of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. That agreement represents a major step towards consolidating the peace process in the Middle East.

My delegation also expresses its satisfaction at the recent agreements regarding the former Yugoslavia, which give us hope for the eventual solution of the protracted crisis there.

We believe that the Eleventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, which will take place in Colombia shortly, will outline the tasks of the Movement in the years to come and will make its contribution to the efforts of the world community aimed at solving a host of interrelated problems of strengthening international peace and security and promoting development and progress.

It is of great importance that with the strengthening of peace, stability and economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region, the contours of regional and subregional cooperation are becoming more pronounced. The progress achieved in resolving the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula has had a positive bearing on the prospects of overall settlement in that part of our region.

Mongolia, in line with its foreign-policy priorities, is endeavouring to participate more actively in the process of regional integration. We trust that this stance will enjoy greater support from other Governments.

More than five years have elapsed since Mongolia embarked upon the road of democracy and economic liberalization. A solid foundation for a new political fabric and its legal guarantees has been laid down. The economic decline has been checked, and signs of recovery are being discerned. We are gratified by the support and assistance of the world community, donor countries and international organizations, which continue to play an important role in consolidating these positive beginnings.

However, the hardships of transition are still being acutely felt as, *inter alia*, our gross national product is quite far from its pre-crisis level, living standards are in decline and poverty is on the rise. Under these circumstances, my Government, in addition to mobilizing its own resources to the utmost, is compelled to seek further assistance from outside. In this regard, we look forward to the fifth donor meeting, to be held in Tokyo early next year.

In conclusion, may I express my confidence that at this commemorative session the General Assembly will consider the items on its agenda in a constructive manner and will adopt decisions responding to the challenges ahead.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Fiji, His Excellency Senator Filipe Nagera Bole.

Mr. Bole (Fiji): Allow me first of all to express very warm greetings and congratulations to the President from the Government and people of Fiji on his election to preside over the General Assembly at this historic fiftieth session. We are confident that with his vast experience and demonstrated leadership, the General Assembly will complete its deliberations at this important session fruitfully. I would also like to express the compliments of my delegation to His Excellency Foreign Minister Amara Essy, whose presidency during the forty-ninth session brought the work of the General Assembly to a successful conclusion.

I wish to join other speakers in warmly welcoming the Republic of Palau as the one hundred and eighty-fifth Member of the United Nations.

The President returned to the Chair.

On 13 October 1970, a quarter of a century ago, Fiji, a newly independent State only three days old, was admitted as this body's one hundred twenty-sixth member. Standing at this very rostrum, the Permanent Representative Designate of Fiji to the United Nations, Ambassador Semesa Sikivou, said,

> "Although I represent a small country far away in the Pacific, my Government and people warmly cherish the principles and ideals which led to the foundation of the United Nations and which have made this great Assembly, in its 25 years of existence, one of the main hopes for the future of mankind. And we are fully resolved to play our part, however humble, in helping to maintain and foster the high purpose for which this Assembly was established — the brotherhood of mankind." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Plenary Meetings, 1863rd meeting, para. 111)*

Today I wish to confirm that since that memorable occasion, nothing has changed to diminish that resolve in any way. It has never been shaken. The intervening years have demonstrated that the high purpose to which Ambassador Sikivou referred constitutes the very cement that binds us together in the pursuit of a common global destiny. The principles and ideals which inspired the

architects of the United Nations still endure as noble goals that challenge us.

Today is a special day for Fiji because it marks the twenty-fifth year of our nationhood. While anniversaries are appropriate moments for celebration, they are also a fitting time for reflection, stocktaking and giving thanks. In our particular case, Fiji owes a debt of gratitude to its friends in the international community who reached out to assist us over these years. Since that moment, over two decades ago, when our frail canoe embarked on its long voyage, with all its reefs and shoals, it has been comforting to have so many friends ready to show us the beacons and lighthouses, enabling us to choose a course that would make our independence meaningful for ourselves. On behalf of the Government and the people of Fiji, it is my solemn duty today to say thank you to our friends. As the canoe continues its journey, we are confident that we will be able to continue counting on the guidance and help of our friends. And this includes the United Nations — we highly value our association with it and the assistance it provides.

Half a century ago, the United Nations was established to end the scourge of war and build a better world for succeeding generations. The cold war and its attendant super-Power rivalry have ended. However, despite decreases in inter-State conflicts, recent history indicates that the much-promised peace dividend from the end of the sterile confrontations that characterized much of the life of the United Nations has not materialized. Conflicts within States continue to tear at the fabric of established societies. Can we truly say, looking around our world, that it is better today than it was 50 years ago?

During the last year, in particular, there has been much soul-searching about the role of the United Nations. This has stemmed in part from a growing perception that in the face of civil strife, the Blue Helmets have been powerless to save lives and prevent conflict. I believe that the seeming hesitancy of United Nations peace-keepers reflects our inability as Member States of the Organization to develop a clear and confident sense of the new role of the United Nations in today's changed global environment.

We all have a collective responsibility to ensure that a more precise vision of the role of the modern United Nations is created. With political will, we can do it. In this process, I suggest that the moment is right for us to rededicate ourselves to the Charter, for it is the principles enshrined in it that represent our best opportunity for finding a clear direction ahead as we approach the new millennium. No less important is that we, as Member States, should equip our Organization with the resources to carry out its reinvigorated mandate.

The United Nations must further enlarge its instruments of preventive diplomacy. The Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace has clearly made an outstanding contribution to discussions in this area. Fiji urges the Assembly to give earnest consideration to implementing his recommendations on this issue. Fiji considers that there is much merit to proposals that a special department or unit be set up to deal with conflict prevention and resolution. This unit could coordinate the actions of a rapid-deployment force to be dispatched to trouble spots when conflicts erupt. More importantly, it would collate, analyse and interpret information and intelligence and develop early detection capacities on potential conflict situations. It would also work with States in developing confidence-building measures designed to minimize both intra- and inter-State conflicts.

The financial position of the United Nations continues to be a matter of concern to Fiji. In this we are not alone, I am sure. The sudden and huge increase in expenditures for peace-keeping operations to a level more than three times as high as that of expenditures for development is becoming difficult to sustain and justify. It has been our view for some time that the apparent imbalance between resources committed to security issues and those committed to development is not justified.

As regards peace-keeping, we all know that there are large-scale arrears in contributions. We do not object to peace-keeping operations. On the contrary, despite our smallness and our relative lack of resources, we have been a consistent and active contributor of troops to various peace-keeping missions. Fiji has paid a heavy human and financial price for contributing troops, but it has done so gladly and willingly and will continue to do so. Clearly, though, the United Nations has to rationalize its peace-keeping expenditures and at the same time reimburse fully and in timely fashion monies that it owes to troop-contributing countries.

It is now becoming clear that a large number of Member States, if not the majority, wish the United Nations to devote more attention and resources to human and social development. Ultimately, there can be no sustainable peace without development. Enduring solutions to social and economic problems represent the basic infrastructure for long-term peace. The United

Nations cannot — indeed, must not — shrink from this aspect of its mission.

A greater rationalization of agencies and programmes within the United Nations and its agencies must be tackled with urgency and vigour. Fiji supports efforts to establish a high-level working group on United Nations reform, and we look forward to contributing to efforts within the Organization aimed at revitalizing and strengthening the United Nations system. Of critical importance to this review process is the need for the United Nations to redirect its focus away from activities of limited value and relevance and to strengthen those which the Member States identify as meaningful. This will require the taking of some hard decisions which can no longer be postponed.

The end of bipolarism and the increased membership of the United Nations have created new challenges for the Organization. One of these is the reform of the Security Council. Fiji has followed with keen interest the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. We believe that the structures of the United Nations should reflect changes in the global political landscape. They should reflect the principles of geographical representation and equity consistent with today's global political and economic realities. The arguments for an enlarged Security Council reflecting these principles are compelling. Fiji also believes that while questions as to the form of the Council are important, equal attention to the substance of the Security Council is crucial. In particular, we would urge that closer attention be paid to the "veto" power in the light of the new global realities to which I have referred.

Fiji would like to register its strong view that the question of the protection and security of small States remains a central concern of the United Nations. Last year, we joined in sponsoring a resolution on this issue in the Fourth Committee, for as long as drug traffickers, international arms dealers, money launderers and international white-collar criminals continue to ply their trade, and as long as mercenaries and terrorists and other adventurers exist, the protection and security of small States will remain vulnerable to acts of aggression from without as well as from within. Small States especially look to the provisions of the Charter as regards respect for their sovereignty and its preservation.

Earlier this year, Fiji joined other States Members of the United Nations in agreeing to an unconditional and indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Review and Extension Conference was difficult and involved a willingness to compromise on the part of many parties. During the Conference, Fiji stated that the future viability of the NPT would depend on the conduct of States in relation to their rights and obligations. Fiji went along with the decision to extend the Treaty despite its imperfections because we believed that it made an important contribution to global peace and security.

We were therefore bitterly disappointed when France announced its decision in June this year to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific. Coming in the wake of the NPT Conference, the French decision displayed great insensitivity. Fiji has long been a consistent opponent of nuclear testing in all forms and in all environments. If anything, we believe that rather than contribute to, they detract from, national and indeed global security. As an oceanic State heavily dependent on the sea for food and survival, we maintain that nuclear testing in our region has a more immediate impact. It threatens one of our main sources of livelihood and our health, not only at the present time, but for generations to come. The French decision to resume nuclear testing at Mururoa has, as is well known, met with worldwide condemnation. South Pacific countries, as those most immediately affected, have added their strong individual and collective voices to the protests. In the light of the cessation of the cold war, one might ask, What is the need for further testing of nuclear weapons?

Fiji therefore urges France, even at this stage, after it has already detonated two of its planned eight nuclear devices, to reconsider its decision. It is not too late to turn the clock back. In recent years, thanks to the moratorium on testing put in place by President Mitterrand, France has enjoyed cordial relations in the Pacific region, but all that good will and the warmth of those relationships are now being rapidly compromised by their recent decision. At their meeting in Madang last month the leaders of the Pacific Forum expressed their extreme outrage at the resumption by the French of their nuclear testing in the Pacific. They decided that, should France continue its testing in the Pacific, the Forum would review the status of France as a Forum dialogue partner. It is therefore singularly disappointing that despite all these objections, France went ahead and detonated a second nuclear device at Fagataufa, on 2 October 1995. We regard this as a slap in the face of the leaders of the Forum and a violent crime against the people of the South Pacific.

As the Assembly is aware, the Forum has now duly suspended France as a post-Forum dialogue partner. This will remain so until France changes its decision on nuclear testing in the Pacific. Fiji fully associates itself with the Forum decision.

Fiji would also like to express its deep regret at the continued nuclear testing by the People's Republic of China. We see no justification for such tests. My Government calls upon all States having similar intentions to desist from taking any action that would threaten negotiations at the current session of the Conference on Disarmament taking place in Geneva. While present indications are that negotiations to conclude a universal, multilateral and effectively verifiable nuclear-test-ban treaty are on track, we cannot yet assume that the time for congratulations and back-patting has been reached. That will only come with the final conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) which takes into account the security of all States, including non-nuclear States. Fiji continues to place high priority on completion of the CTBT negotiations in 1996. We welcome President Clinton's commitment to a zero threshold test-ban treaty. Fiji urges other nuclear-weapon States that have not yet done so to give similar assurances. These States have a special responsibility in ensuring that the CTBT negotiations remain on track. We believe that a comprehensive treaty covering all relevant concerns will make a significant contribution to efforts towards nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects.

Within our own region, the South Pacific, we have a number of conventions and treaties designed to keep the region free from nuclear and other hazardous material. These include the Convention for the Protection and Development of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region, of 1989, and its related Protocols — the Noumea Convention, the Waigani Convention — which was opened for signature only last month and which aims to ban the importation into Forum island countries of hazardous and radioactive wastes and to control the transboundary movement and management of hazardous wastes within the South Pacific region — and the South Pacific nuclear-free-zone Treaty, the Treaty of Rarotonga, of 1985, and its three Protocols.

With regard to the latter, we are pleased that two of the five nuclear Powers — China and the Russian Federation — have signed the relevant Protocols. But the remaining three have not done so as yet. We therefore urge the United States of America, France and the United Kingdom to sign the Protocols as soon as possible as a demonstration of their commitment to a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty.

From a global perspective, it had been predicted that the conclusion of the Uruguay Round would link economies more strongly through increased flows of trade and finance based on trade liberalization and a concomitant strengthening of multilateral trading systems. While trade liberalization caused by the Uruguay Round has had positive effects on the trade and incomes of some countries, the beneficial results of that process have been far from uniform. Nor have they been universal. Most, if not all, of the Pacific island countries are among those that have been adversely affected by the changed global trading regime, in part as a result of the removal of certain preferential trade arrangements of which they formed a part. Small island developing economies have borne the brunt of these changes, which have forced sometimes painful adjustments.

We would therefore urge our developed-country partners to assist efforts we are making at the national and regional levels to enhance our international economic competitiveness and to expand our trading opportunities. Last year, Fiji, along with other small island developing countries, welcomed General Assembly resolution 49/100, which recalled the special economic vulnerability of the small island developing States. Fiji acknowledges the role of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the Secretariat in research and policy analysis in the strengthening of the capacities of small island developing States to capture a larger share of world trade. We welcome the recent appointments of senior staff in both those entities to provide greater focus on problems related to small island developing States. However, Fiji believes that more tangible and concrete evidence of specific support measures to small island developing States must be put in place without further delay. We would urgently commend this as a matter to be studied in some detail by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its high-level segment to be convened next year.

Talk of peace and development enjoins all within our global village, especially leaders, to recall and to rededicate themselves to the commitments they agreed to at the World Summit for Social Development held earlier this year in Denmark. If we as leaders in Government commit ourselves to creating an economic, political and social environment that will enable people to achieve

social development, we will have gone a long way towards creating an environment conducive to peace.

Fiji would therefore renew its plea to the developed industrialized countries to enhance their assistance to developing countries within the framework of the Copenhagen Declaration to bring about improved standards of living in the third world. In the long term, more stable and more affluent national societies comprising well-nourished individuals will be less of a threat to global peace and stability than States whose citizens languish in abject poverty and the horrors of sectarian violence. At the same time, we also recognize that since resources, particularly development assistance, are getting harder to come by, it is incumbent upon all of us to see that whatever resources are made available are put to the best possible use.

Indeed, proper management of resources is increasingly becoming one of the major preoccupations of both the aid donors and the aid recipients in our region of the South Pacific. The South Pacific Forum had "Managing resources" as its theme in 1994. The Forum's deliberations this year, which took place only last month in Papua New Guinea, centred on the theme of "Securing development beyond 2000". As in previous years, the Forum island members again had very useful discussions with aid donors in the region in their post-Forum dialogue. We are deeply appreciative of the opportunity to sit down together with the donors and discuss regional issues of mutual concern. The donors included the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Japan, Canada, the European Union, the People's Republic of China, Taiwan and the Republic of Korea.

We believe that regional cooperation will play an increasingly important role in the development of our national economies. We therefore highly value our increasing contacts with the countries members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the economies of South-East Asia generally. This includes Taiwan, with which we enjoy very useful and close trade, economic and technical cooperation, just as we do with the People's Republic of China, with which we have strong and unequivocally clear official relations. We believe that Taiwan, like the People's Republic of China, has huge potential to contribute in a practical way to the development of our region and to the world generally. We therefore welcome the spirit of dialogue and cooperation between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China and hope that the international community at large will also be able to benefit from such cooperation. Their increased participation and cooperation in the activities of various international and regional forums would certainly be welcome.

Fiji, as a member of the South Pacific Forum, is pleased that the Republic of Korea has now joined the Forum as a post-Forum dialogue partner. We are confident that the Republic of Korea, a rapidly growing economic Power, can play a very significant role in the development of the South Pacific region. We welcome the opportunities that lie ahead. Further, we hope that initiatives for talks between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue. We hope that in due course there will be direct dialogue between the two Koreas, leading to their reconciliation and eventual reunification.

Last month, the Fourth World Conference on Women, in which Fiji also participated, was held at Beijing. We thank the Government and the people of China for acting as host to the Conference. Our delegation had high praise for the efficient organization of the Conference. We welcome the very useful deliberations that took place at Beijing. Fiji looks forward to early implementation of the Platform of Action so that the ideas contained in it may be translated into meaningful activity for the betterment of women.

Preoccupation with economic progress should not be at the expense of continued protection of the environment and sustainable development. Indeed, good environmental housekeeping will encourage economic growth rather than hinder it.

While the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at Rio de Janeiro was seen as a defining moment in the quest for sustainability and environmental protection, Fiji regrets that a lack of political commitment, coupled with donor fatigue, has been responsible for the failure of most developed countries to allocate adequate financial resources to enable developing countries to tackle the plethora of problems associated with environmental degradation.

If no increased official development assistance is forthcoming and if the international target of 0.7 per cent is not met, there will be serious reneging on commitments made at Rio. Fiji is especially concerned as a small island developing State that the more affluent industrialized countries should recognize their responsibility towards the international community and take urgent steps to assist small island developing States

in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action. Specifically, the need is for international cooperation, technology transfer and financial resources.

There is also a critical need for access to markets, acquisition of new technologies, investments and institutional and human resource development by small island developing States to enable them to respond more effectively to the challenge of finding new paths to sustainable development. My Government would urge all parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to move speedily towards the conclusion of an effective protocol that would ultimately bring about improvements in the global climate system. For front-line States such as Fiji, vulnerable as we are to rising sea levels, hurricanes and other phenomena associated with a worst-case scenario of climate change, politics has little to do with the reality that our physical survival would be affected if immediate action to remedy ailments in the world climate system were not taken. In this context, Fiji welcomes the commencement of negotiations on the Berlin mandate to strengthen the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which got under way in Geneva last August.

At the first Conference of the Parties to the Convention, Fiji had expressed its regret that the outcome of the Conference was minimal. Fiji continues to believe that the protocol of the Alliance of Small Island States should form the basis of any new instrument aimed at strengthening the climate Convention. Further, at the present time, no new commitments should attach to developing countries, given that their overriding priority will remain the combatting of poverty. Recognizing that the present health of the world's climate system is a result of the detrimental patterns of production and consumption of the industrialized countries, those countries should continue to take the lead in reducing the emission of greenhouse gases.

Fiji welcomes the successful completion of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. The Agreement produced by the Conference was the culmination of more than two years of work by Member countries that participated in it. It will form yet another important building block in the progressive development of international law under the auspices of the United Nations. Fiji hopes that the Agreement will lead to the sustainable utilization of the living resources of the sea. For its part, Fiji was both honoured and privileged to have played a small part in facilitating the work of the Conference. We have kept true to the promise of Ambassador Sikivou that Fiji would play its part, however humble, in the affairs of this great Assembly.

At this time I would like to pay a special tribute to Ambassador Satya Nandan, under whose guidance as Chairman the Conference completed the difficult task of weaving together the sometimes competing interests that underlie the often complex and technical negotiations that allowed for an agreement. Ambassador Nandan has done us proud, and Fiji is indebted to him for his enduring contribution.

Fiji has followed with keen interest the deliberations of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations under the brilliant stewardship of Mrs. Erica-Irene Daes, under whose guidance a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples has been completed. Fiji believes that the draft declaration is comprehensive and contains the fundamentals that should be part of any instrument that seeks to address the legitimate concerns and aspirations of all indigenous peoples. We would urge all States Members of the United Nations to support efforts to conclude work leading to early adoption of the draft declaration. However, while the draft declaration is important, Fiji considers that it is now time to give the fullest recognition at the international level to the rights of indigenous peoples by commencing negotiations to conclude as soon as possible a legal covenant on the subject. My Government believes that such an instrument would be a logical progression following the adoption of the draft declaration and would signal that the political will to respect the rights of indigenous peoples exists.

During the greater part of the life of the United Nations, the strong have dictated to the feeble, the big to the small, the mighty to the weak. While there has been some semblance of order, it has often been at the expense of justice and equity. In this context, while the United Nations has been a symbol of hope for people from small countries such as mine, much more remains to be done before it can fulfil the promise of promoting human dignity, improved standards of living and social progress for all. That said, however, Fiji's view is that the United Nations remains the best and most imaginative organization mankind has yet devised for its survival in peace, justice and progress.

On this day, 10 October, which is the silver anniversary of the independence of Fiji, and on the golden anniversary of the United Nations, we want to share with the international community the extraordinary

opportunity to rededicate ourselves to fulfilling the aspirations of the Charter. The United Nations must continue to advance the interests of all mankind by providing a meaningful forum for genuine dialogue between the rich and the poor for the establishment of conditions for development, and thus for peace.

Permit me to conclude with a final walk down memory lane. When Fiji's first Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, now President, addressed this Assembly on 21 October 1970, he ended his historic address with these words:

> "much of the effort of the United Nations has been concentrated on improving the material well-being of the peoples of the world, and I have just been reading the far-reaching and imaginative report of the Second Committee setting out a blueprint for the second decade of economic development. It may then sound ungrateful for a small country like Fiji, which has so often been at the receiving end of the bounty, to question this priority. But so many of these schemes, welcome as they are, are confined within the boundaries of one country. Spiritual and moral values, on the other hand, know no frontiers, and by upholding and encouraging these, we are following a course which is truly international, and which is calculated more than anything else to give reality to the concept of one world. We do not live by bread alone, and it is only from the firm base of sound moral and spiritual standards that we can go on to meaningful economic progress". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fifth Session, Plenary Meetings, 1876th meeting, para. 210)*

I would suggest that this advice, given with characteristic humility, as it was then by the architect of modern Fiji, is no less powerful today than it was 25 years ago. I recommend it for the further consideration of this gathering.

Address by Manuel Saturnino Da Costa, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Manuel Saturnino Da Costa, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Manuel Saturnino Da Costa, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Saturnino Da Costa (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in Portuguese; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation*): On behalf of my country and my Government, Sir, may I first of all extend warmest congratulations to you on your election to the presidency of this session of the General Assembly, which coincides with the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Your assumption of the presidency of this session is a crowning event in a long and brilliant political and diplomatic career, and will undoubtedly ensure the success of our deliberations. It is all the more gratifying for us to emphasize this fact, since we share with your country, Portugal, a historic past of deeply rooted links of culture and cooperation, which today unite our peoples and our countries.

We also extend our congratulations to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, a country with which we have excellent relations of friendship and cooperation, on the brilliant way in which he guided the proceedings of the forty-ninth session.

We also want to take this opportunity to express to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, our appreciation for the dynamic way in which he is leading our Organization.

As we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of our Organization, and one year after the holding of the first multiparty elections in Guinea-Bissau, I feel particularly honoured to have the privilege of representing my country at this historic session of the General Assembly. This event offers the international community a special occasion and an appropriate framework for reaffirming our full adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter. A half century after its creation, the United Nations must, more than ever before, be able to confront new challenges.

Guinea-Bissau is of the opinion that in order to best respond to the needs of the day, our Organization must undertake urgent and appropriate reforms. I am convinced that the political and socio-economic changes taking place on the international scene have repercussions for the functioning of our Organization. It is our profound conviction that the end of the bipolarization of

international relations and the cold war promises better conditions for the future of our Organization.

The broad prospects opening up for the process of the peaceful settlement of conflicts in many parts of the world are not just a matter of circumstance, but are rather the expression of the international community's unequivocal will to establish lasting peace.

It is in this context that we note with satisfaction that after so many efforts made by the international community, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in particular, significant progress has been made in Liberia.

As far as Angola is concerned, we welcome the way in which the negotiation process and the implementation of the agreements signed in Lusaka have developed. We congratulate the people and leaders of the fraternal country of Mozambique for the exemplary way in which the first multiparty elections took place there.

The situation in Somalia continues to be of serious concern to Guinea-Bissau. We urge the parties concerned to put an end to hostilities, and to continue negotiations with a view to achieving national reconciliation.

In the Middle East, the peace process deserves the support of the international community. We thus welcome with satisfaction the progress achieved.

As regards Jammu and Kashmir, my country urges the parties to the conflict to find a just and lasting solution.

My country continues to support the initiatives regarding negotiations in East Timor, under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with a view to a just solution.

In connection with the question of the embargo affecting Cuba, which has an impact on the population of that country, Guinea-Bissau encourages dialogue between the parties concerned with a view to a definitive and satisfactory solution.

In the former Yugoslavia, where the international community has been witness to acts of inhumanity, we can at last welcome with optimism the progress achieved in the course of negotiations.

As the international community celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of our universal Organization, may I, on behalf of my Government, reiterate our firm conviction that the Republic of China on Taiwan should form part of the United Nations on the basis of the application of the principle of the parallel representation of divided countries. In this context, it would be desirable for the two countries to participate simultaneously in international activities, with a view to promoting constructive contacts and negotiations. Respect for and the exercise of human rights and pluralist democracy are factors in producing national unity and peace, and in preserving international stability. Guinea-Bissau continues to endeavour to defend and safeguard this concept, whose constant application is vital to development.

Guinea-Bissau continues to work to improve the management of its economy. The proper implementation of a structural adjustment programme reflects the constant concerns of my Government. I am convinced that in spite of our own efforts of macroeconomic management to improve the well-being of our populations, my country needs the support of the international community, with a view to confronting the many development challenges we face. The poverty and social injustice suffered by most of mankind constitute root causes of the conflict, threatening the peace and stability of the world; the ideological tensions of the cold war could, indeed, be replaced by other crises, especially crises of an economic and financial origin, if urgent measures are not immediately taken.

The threat to the environment is a reality which must be urgently combated. The protection of the ecosystem requires continued support for the development process of the poorest countries. It is for this reason that we believe that underdevelopment poses a serious threat to the environment of the African continent. The countries members of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) are facing grave problems of draught and other natural disasters that could seriously compromise their social and economic development.

More than ever before, international cooperation is becoming imperative for world peace and for the protection and strengthening of human dignity in order to ensure full enjoyment of the rights and aspirations of present and future generations. The social development activities of the United Nations should focus in particular on the most vulnerable groups, such as women, children, young people, the aged and the disabled.

Guinea-Bissau, which is loyal to the principles of the Charter, reaffirms its determination to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and solemnly reiterates its firm resolve to persevere in that direction. In this context, we welcome with pleasure the results of the World Summit for Social Development and of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Guinea-Bissau's contribution to the attainment of the purposes and principles of our Organization is well known. Our participation in different peace-keeping operations around the world is the clearest illustration of this. We are convinced that the maintenance of international peace and security is the collective responsibility of all Member States, large and small, in accordance with the principle of the sovereign equality of States. In this context, my country, Guinea-Bissau, submitted its candidature for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, which has been endorsed by the African Group. In this regard, I request the support of all Member States.

On behalf of the General Assembly, the President thanked the Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau for his statement; Mr. Saturnino Da Costa, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.